Give a Gift from the Kitchen

Some gifts are large. Others are so small you nest them in boxes to give a little drama to their unwrapping. But what's a gift both great and small at the same time?

It's the gift that pleases those for whom it's hard to find something special. In this case it might be a favorite aunt or uncle, a helpful neighbor or even a special niece or nephew. The gift is a snack or spread made in your own kitchen.

Snack Mix for giving is a wholesome tidbit for a teenager or adult who can use a snack, from the calorie standpoint, while reading, studying or watching the ball game.

It contains almonds, peanuts, rice cereal and raisins, chow mein noodles, sesame seed and coconut in a seasoned melted butter.

Brandy Cheese Spread is a sophisticated butter-up for crackers or gingersnaps which might be included with an attractive jar of the mix. If you want to make the gift mors elaborate, present with attractive, disposable plates and spreaders.

The spread itself is a combination of shredded Cheddar and butter with seasonings.

For those who like breakfast or those who make a special occasion of the weekend breakfast, there's Raspberry Butter, pastel colored and delicious for pancakes, hot breads or waffles.

Herbs in all ways are very popular right now. How about blending parsley, chives and thyme in butter that can then be served with chicken, steak, fish, baked potatoes or green beans?

What do you give a person who has everything. Well, one thing you might do is to make personalized gifts from your kitchen. After all, who doesn't like homemade things to eat.

SNACK MIX

Yield: approx. 10 cups

¾ cup [1 stick] butter
¼ cup soy sauce
1 teaspoon seasoned salt
1 cup blanched whole almonds
3 cups bite-size crispy rice squares
1 can [1 lb.] salted cocktail peanuts
1 cup golden raisins
1 can [3 oz.] chow mein noodles
¼ cup sesame seed
1 can [3½ oz.] flaked coconut

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Heat butter, soy sauce and seasoned salt in large skillet over low heat until butter is melted. Stir in almonds. Cook, stirring constantly, 5 minutes. Stir in cereal, peanuts, raisins, noodles and sesame seed.

Cook, stirring constantly, until noodles begin to brown, about 10 minutes. Stir in coconut. Spread half of the mixture in a 15 x 10 - inch jelly roll pan. Bake 10 - minutes. Cool on paper toweling. Repeat with remaining mixture. Store in air-tight container at room temperature. (Mixture keeps up to 1 month.)

BRANDY CHEESE SPRAD

Yield: approx. 1¼ cups

2 cups [8 oz.] shredded Cheddar cheese
¾ cup [½ stick] butter
1 tablespoon brandy
½ teaspoon sugar
One - eighth teaspoon cayenne
½ teaspoon cumin seed, if desired
Assorted crackers
Gingersnaps

Cream cheese and butter in small mixer bowl until well combined. Add branch, sugar and cayenne; beat until light and fluffy. Stir in cumin seed. Cover and refrigerate several days to allow flavors to blend. Let spread come to room temperature before serving with assorted crackers and gingersnaps. (Cheese spread will keep in refrigerator up to 1 month.)

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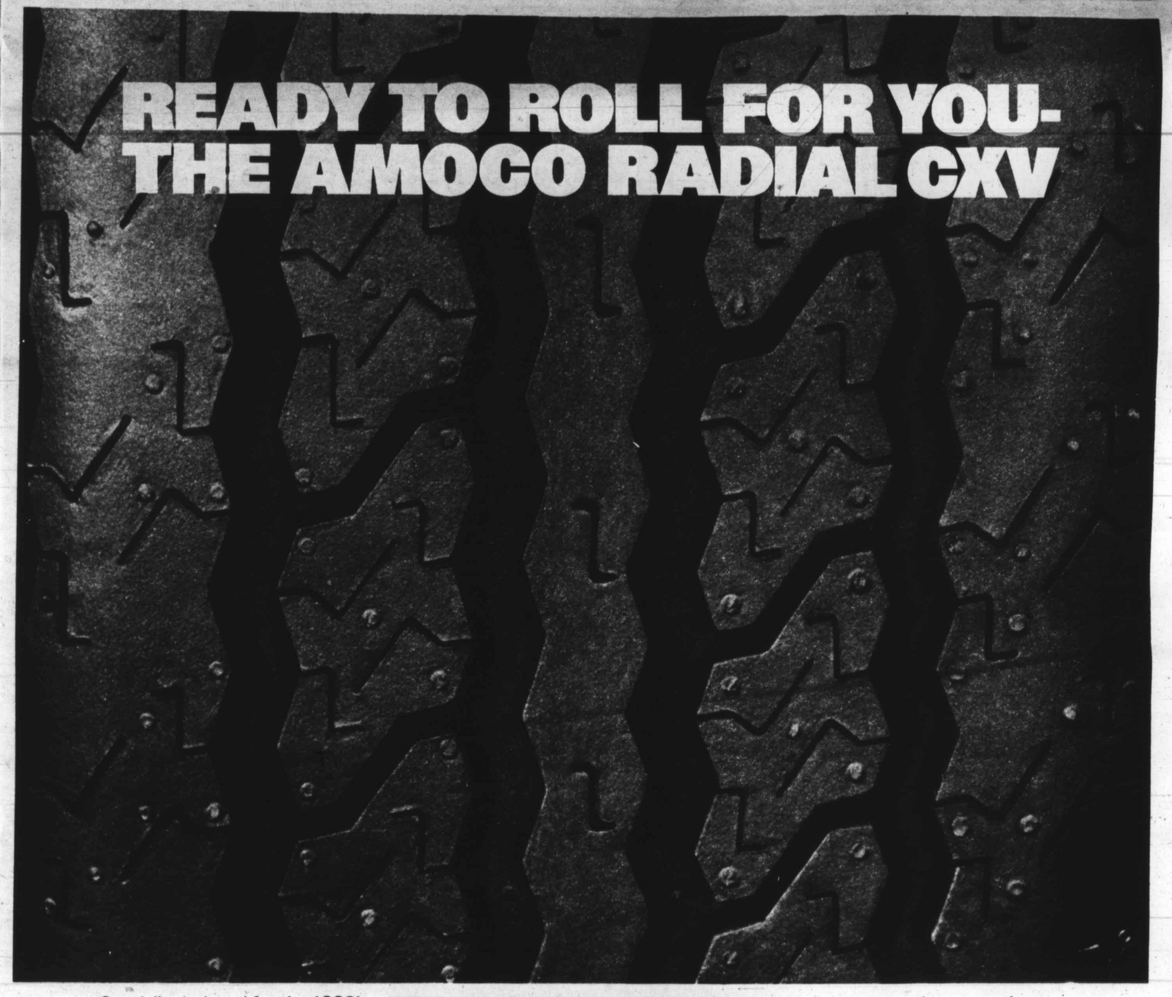

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